

IOWA COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Wednesday, September 19, 2012 - 10:00 a.m.

Malloy Leisure Resource Center

Malloy Building

Iowa Veterans Home

Marshalltown, Iowa

PRESENT: Todd Jacobus, Chairperson, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Dan Gannon, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Jon Wille, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Darlene McMartin, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Kate Myers, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Larry Spencer, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Bill Wallace, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

EXCUSED: Becky Dirks Haugsted, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Mickey Williams, Member, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

STAFF: Jodi Tymeson, Executive Director, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
David Worley, Commandant, Iowa Veterans Home
Penny Cutler-Bermudez, Support Services Administrator, IVH
Doug Freeman, Financial Division Administrator, IVH
Shauna Callaway, Deputy Director, IVH
Mike Hines, Admin. Assist. Commandant's Office, Iowa Veterans Home – Meeting Secretary

GUESTS: Linda Blake, Iowa City VA, Office of Rural Health
Lyle Schaffer, American Legion Dept. Commander
Amy Beller, Sen. Harkins Office
Dave Thornburg, DAV/Iowa Veterans Council
Mike Capps II, Homeless Disabled Vet, Iowa Fathers OFFE
Arlinda McKeen, SPPG
Valerie Buckingham, Iowa City VA, Public Affairs Office
Paul Freeman, MOPH-IVC Chairman
Richard Bullock, American Legion
Daniel Steen, Gladbrook
John Derner, Adjutant, American Legion

Joe Hays, AMVETS
David Bolton, DAV
Larry Winther, State Commander, VFW
Larry Larson, Past Dept. Commander, VFW
Mike Kuhn, NCVSO, Marion County, IACCVSO
Brett McClain, NCVSO, Story County, IACCVSO
Mari Mielke, IDVA
Chris Myers, veteran
Meleia Norton, Iowa City VA/Office of Rural Health
Jennifer Acton, Legislative Services Agency

cc: Jeff Boeyink, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office
Ted Stopulos, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
Barbara Galloway, Assistant Attorney, Attorney General's Office
Sandra Hurtado-Peters, Department of Management
Jennifer Acton, Legislative Fiscal Bureau
Jenny Lawrence, Auditor's Office
Steve Ainger, DAS

Terri Beer, Director, VA Regional Office
Jerry Hansen, President, IACCV
Dale Purdy, Commander, AMVETS
Barry Sharp, Director, VAMC, Iowa City
Don Cooper, VAMC, Des Moines
Lyle Schaffer, Commander, American Legion
John Derner, Adjutant, American Legion

David Worley, Commandant, IVH
Michael Hines, Administrative Assistant, IVH
Senator Daryl Beall, Chair, Senate VA Committee
Senator James Seymour, RM, Senate VA Committee
Senator Jeff Danielson, VC, Senate VA Committee
Representative Jerry Kearns, RM, House VA Committee
Representative Ray Zirkelbach, Chair, House VA Committee
Representative Guy Vander Linden, VC, House VA Committee
Zeke Furlong, House Democratic Research Staff
Tom Ashworth, Senate Republican Caucus Staff
Julie Simon, Senate Democratic Caucus Staff

Dave Thornburg, Commander, DAV
Allan Packer, Commander, Ex-Prisoners of War
Jon Schneider, President, Paralyzed Veterans of America
William Gansemer, Commander, MCL
Paul Pickard, Commander, MOPH
Larry Winther, Commander, VFW
Ray Hutchison, Commander, VVA
Jill Joseph, IDVA Outreach Coordinator

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE "UNAPPROVED" UNTIL ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

APPROVED: Todd M. Jacobus DATE: 9 Jan 2013
Todd Jacobus, Chairperson, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

- Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by Todd Jacobus, Chairperson, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs.
- Pledge of Allegiance/
Moment of Silence: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Chairperson Jacobus explained 150 years ago was the Battle of Antietam. Our country spent a solid week burying some of the 23,000 casualties that were impacted by that battle. He asked for a moment of silence for those who lost their lives.
- Roll Call: Roll call of Commission members was completed by the Meeting Secretary. A quorum was present. It was indicated that Mickey Williams injured her foot so would not be in attendance. It was indicated that Becky Dirks-Haugsted had car problems and would be late, but would be here.
- Welcome/Intro. of
Guests: Chairperson Jacobus welcomed everyone in attendance. Round table of introductions was held.
- Approval of Agenda: Chairperson Jacobus asked to amend the agenda to add "Update by State Public Policy Grant."
- Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve the amendment to the agenda. Second by Commissioner Commissioner Gannon. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote was not taken. Approved unanimously.
- Approval of Minutes: Corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of the 7/1/12 Trust Fund meeting were called for. Commissioner Gannon moved to approve the 7/1/12 minutes as distributed. Second by Commissioner Spencer. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote was not taken. Approved unanimously. Minutes of 7/1/12 Trust Fund meeting approved.
- Corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of the 7/11/12 meeting were called for. Commissioner Myers moved to approved the 7/11/12 minutes as distributed. Second by Commissioner Wille. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote was not taken. Approved unanimously. Minutes of 7/11/12 meeting approved.
- Corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of the 9/5/12 Trust Fund conference call were called for. Commissioner McMartin moved to approve the 9/5/12 minutes with no changes. Second by Commissioner Gannon. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote was not taken. Approved unanimously. Minutes of 9/5/12 meeting approved.
- VA Regional Office No one was present. No report.

Update:

VA Medical Centers, No one was present. No report.
Des Moines Update:

VA Medical Center, Valerie Buckingham gave the update for the Iowa City VA Medical Center. Valerie announced Mr. Sharp moved back to
Iowa City Update: Iowa City the beginning of September. He helped out in Minneapolis for eight months and they are still searching for a director.

We had offered the position of Chief of Staff to a doctor but he has declined for personal reasons. We will continue searching for a new chief of staff. Our Chief of Medicine and Specialty Care, Dr. Carl Thomas, has taken a new position at the University of Iowa so we will soon be recruiting for his position as well.

A brief summary of Iowa City's ongoing construction was given.

We have been approved to hire 11 additional mental health positions. Seven have been hired as of two weeks ago, so we will have three more positions left to hire. We are replacing all the boilers at the medical center. They have a 30 – 40 year life span and the last time they were replaced was 1978. John Derner asked if those mental health positions are all for the hospital or are some of those for the CBOCs? It was indicated they are for the CBOC's as well. In response to a question about their national TEE Tournament, she had not seen a report on that yet. Valerie announced Rod Sherman, Patient advocate, has taken a new position. Recruitment for that position has begun and they were doing interviews last week.

Chairperson Jacobus thanked Valerie for coming and making the trip.

Office of Rural Health: Linda Blake introduced herself and thanked the Commission for giving her time on the agenda to give a summary of what the Office of Rural Health is about. She passed out some materials. A brochure that describes what the Office of Rural Health is and does and a map that shows how the areas are divided. She also passed out some veteran comment cards for any feedback or information. She will take those back to the Iowa City VA.

Linda commented she volunteered for the TEE Tournament for the first time. It was a wonderful event and well attended. People were there from all over the country.

She works for an organization called the Office of Rural Health. It was established about five years ago with the intent of pushing access for services out to veterans in rural areas. Our focus really has been on the approximately 40% of veterans who live in rural areas and how do we make care more accessible to them since distance, travel, etc., can be barriers?

The brochure explains the organization. It is a five-year funded effort and we are now entering the fifth year. An evaluation is being completed. The map that was passed out shows the country divided into three sections, the western region, a central region and the eastern region. The Central Region is in Iowa City. The Western Region is in Salt Lake City. The Eastern Region has two areas. The VISNs are indicated as well. Activities, projects, requests for funds, grants, etc., comes through us. There's an evaluation process where projects are approved. Some of the things the Office of Rural Health has supported include the CBOCs, their initial start-up, and some of the sustainment funding. The last couple of years there has been a huge expansion and an emphasis on tele-health.

Linda briefed on their various projects, including sending fit kits to veterans for in-home testing, better communication between the VA care provider and their local health care provider, remote cardiac rehab and working on a tobacco quit line. Other projects include tele-health for HIV patients, permanent housing and training. They have a Rural Health Advocate who will better coordinate community resources, VA resources, etc., to maximize services that are available to veterans and optimizing what we can for them. She also briefed attendees on a project at Western Illinois University. Office of Rural Health also does some outreach activities, job fairs for veterans, and veteran appreciation events as well.

Discussion revolved around transportation, access for veterans in rural areas and communication.

Chairperson Jacobus thanked them for coming from Iowa City to make this presentation. It brings your program into our official minutes for future reference. It gets all of us synchronized with what we have got going on in our VA hospital. Thank you very much for your efforts.

Valerie thanked the Commission also. It helps put some things on their radar too, so they appreciate it very much.

Iowa Veterans Home
Update:

Commandant Worley commented the Colonel and him have been discussing the budget request. Historically we have always gotten approval from the Commission for our report, but it was not required. We have to submit our budget and put it into the state system quickly. Diana Steiner, IVH Budget Analyst, gave the budget report.

Budget Report: Diana explained that all state departments have to submit their budget by October 1, then the Governor reviews them and comes out with his recommendation. Then he turns that over to the Legislature and the Legislature actually appropriates the money. Diana reviewed the handout that the Commission members had. The first two pages are the Veterans Home operating budget. Then the third page is our Major Maintenance Request. On the spreadsheet, the first column of numbers on the left is how the state categorizes the different revenues and expenses and in red is Diana's descriptions to explain to the Commission how it applies to the Iowa Veterans Home.

The column in the middle of the page, titled Actual FY12, is for the year that just closed June 30. We had until August 31 to pay our bills and September 15 to get all revenues in, so we are done with Fiscal Year 2012. The next column, FY13, is the current year we are in. The next two columns are FY14 and FY15, that is actually what we will be entering into the state system by October 1 for our budget request.

Going down by row, Diana reviewed the major items. The first row, under Resources, is the State Appropriation. In FY12 we were appropriated \$8.9 million and this year we are only appropriated \$8 million. The Legislature reduced our budget by \$926,437. Originally during session they were looking at all state agencies taking a reduction in office supplies and equipment and they came up with some formula. During session we knew we were going to get cut \$176,000, but when the session ended, we were actually reduced by \$926,437 in our operating budget. Then they turned around and gave us \$976,000 for our boiler project. It kind of nets out except now our appropriation is permanently reduced, so when we go in and ask for a status quo budget, now we have to ask for the \$8 million instead of \$8.9 million.

Moving down the row, in the receipts where it says 201R, Federal Support, the federal money we get is for our VA per diem and funding for Medicare Part B, Fee-for-Service, which would be for lab, physician visits, etc. If you compare FY12 to FY13 – FY15, you'll see that there is a reduction because we are actually lowering our projected census for this year because there will be a lot of remodeling in the Dack and Malloy buildings.

Under row 501R, Refunds and Reimbursements, this is by far our biggest revenue resources. This is made up of Medicaid, which we collect almost \$30 million a year. We also bill our residents for support, which is based on their ability to pay. We collected almost \$15 million from them. The other item is insurance billings for drugs and Fee-for-Service. That is over \$2 million. Those two revenue lines is the majority of our revenue budget.

The Total Resources row shows what we are projecting by the close of the fiscal year. In the line above that, 04B, Balance Brought Forward from prior fiscal year, we carried forward \$2.9 million from FY11 to FY12. From FY12, we

carried forward \$4 million into FY13. Under statute, we are allowed to carry forward all of our funds. However, when the Legislature comes into session, they have been going back and changing the language for the prior fiscal year. In FY12, we got to keep the first \$500,000 and the rest we had to transfer to DHS. During session this year, same thing happened. Out of that \$4 million, we get to keep \$500,000 and the rest will go to DHS.

A question was asked where the \$4 million income came from. Diana explained that we brought in \$2.9 million from the prior year. We had some reductions in personnel and the health insurance increase was not as high as usual. Also, our census ended up higher than expected, which generated more revenue.

Moving down to the Expenditures section, the biggest line is 101, Personnel Services—Salaries. In FY12 we spent about \$60 million and FY13 we are looking at \$63 million. The primary increases are state employees' cost of living adjustment. In July we were given a 2 percent increase and in January we are going to get another 1 percent, plus staff that are not at the top of their pay grade get a 4.5 percent step increase on their anniversary. Then we have health insurance that will go up in January as well. A combination of those items the state calls salary adjustment. Then we also have a full year of Fox and Ulery being opened and we staffed up higher for those (about 24 FTEs annually).

On the second page, about one-third down the page, row 407, Intra-State Transfers, in FY12 and FY13, the bulk of that line is transferring to DHS. Under revenues, we have to show our total carry forward in which we get to keep \$500,000, and then we show the rest of the money transferred out under expenses.

The very last line, 91B, Balance Brought Forward into next fiscal year, you can see that \$4 million is what I had leftover from FY12 and it is on the first page under FY13. This is our operating budget.

Chairperson Jacobus stated there was a comment in the newspaper recently about recent inspections. Commandant Worley stated he was going to address that later. Chairperson Jacobus asked how that affected the budget? Commandant Worley again stated he would address that.

Diana continued. The third page is our capitals request. We are asked to do a five-year plan. Our first item for FY14 is to replace the emergency fuel tanks for the boilers and install a spill containment. We think it will be around \$450,000. In FY15, we'd like \$200,000 to replace sidewalks and concrete. We don't have anything for FY16. In FY17 we are requesting \$600,000 for an electrical upgrade. In FY18 we need to replace air handlers in the Sheeler building and that

will be \$500,000. Diana explained even though the Department requests it, the money actually gets appropriated to Department of Administrative Services. Then they prioritize it and we may or may not get funding.

Chairperson Jacobus asked do you want a year out there where you're not requesting anything so there's a zero balance one year and then you go back the next year and ask, or do you just want to get projects lined up so you're asking for money every year? Commandant stated if something comes up, we can always change it. It is a five-year plan so you can change it every year. Diana stated they are primarily looking at FY14 and FY15 for a two-year budget. The future years' information is out there but she didn't know how much they focus on it. They never ask questions regarding the outer years. Commandant explained we are asking for concrete work all the time. There are a lot of sidewalks to replace. We are doing that constantly.

Diana concluded her report.

Commandant stated she does a great job. The senior leaders have left but he wanted to introduce them. The three of them are probably doing the work of what 10 or 11 people did in the past. We are making a lot of good, sound budget decisions. They are the ones that do all the hard work. I'm the one that gets to stand up here and get all the glory.

Commandant briefed attendees on a recent DIA (Department of Inspections and Appeals) result that came in. Anytime that there are certain events that happen at the Iowa Veterans Home, we have to report them to DIA. If a resident has a fall with fracture, we have to report that. Sometimes they choose to come in to investigate that and sometimes they choose not to. The average nursing home has 58 beds in Iowa. We have over 520 nursing home beds. We are over nine times larger than the average nursing home in the State of Iowa. We are over nine times larger than the average nursing home in the country. We have more things happen here than the other places. DIA came in and investigated, found some results. They weren't very positive. A couple of things I want to make sure that we set straight. One is quality of care at the Iowa Veterans Home has been and always continues to be great. If you have a friend or a loved one here, they are getting better quality of care than anywhere they could be. There are great nursing homes out there. I'm not criticizing them. But the quality of care and the service that we provide here for our residents, that staff out there is busting their butt every day to provide quality of care. Once in a while we're going to slip up. So we'll fix that. We continue to educate and train with our staff. We are going to continue to work at that. If you have questions about that, I'll be around all day so you can ask about that. As far as the building, we are not shut down to admissions. We admitted two people yesterday. We are going to continue to admit veterans and their spouses to the Iowa Veterans Home. We submitted our Plan of Correction this morning to DIA. They will decide to accept that Plan of Correction or not, then they will let us know. They will come

back in for a follow-up visit and ensure that we are following through with our Plan of Correction. Once that has happened and we have met substantial compliance, then we can go back. What we cannot do is we cannot bill Medicaid or Medicare for new admissions starting the 22nd. So any new admissions after the 22nd, we can't bill for. We will have DIA back in here, have this cleared up, and we will be taken care of. We are going to move out and take care of our mission. So, if you have a lot of questions about that, I'll be, it's up to the Colonel to decide, but I'll be around. You can ask me any questions you want. We are public. We are a government entity. We are not hiding anything, so you can ask whatever you want and I promise you I'll answer it. But once again I want to remind you, the quality of care at the Iowa Veterans Home has not slipped one bit. It's always been great and it's going to continue to be great. That's not going to change. When Joe needs to come here for long-term care, we're going to make sure he gets the best care possible.

Commissioner McMartin asked when you turn your plan for approval in, how quickly does DIA they respond? Commandant Worley answered it is up to them and it is up to what they are doing. We hope they respond relatively quickly because they understand the importance of it. Normally, they come back in about ten days. Shauna would say about ten days. If DIA accepts the Plan of Correction, which we are very good at what we do, so I don't see any problems with that. Then DIA comes in and does a follow-up visit, which could take two or three days. Then on that day, they may not actually give us the results for another three or four weeks in writing, but that's the day that we substantiate compliance.

Commissioner McMartin asked another question regarding the budget. How does the funding for the fine come out of the budget? Commandant Worley stated we pay the fine. It comes right out of our budget. Our budget is very good. We are making very smart decisions. As Diana said, we're giving back \$2.5 million to the state, and so this year we did not get budgeted for pay raises so we absorb all that. I don't see any problems with our budget. I mean we are always going to have challenges. I've been working for some level of government for 30 years. You've all heard me say this before, we never had enough money, we never have enough people and we still get the job done all the time. All of us are veterans, so we all refer, we often relate to that. We don't like it. It's \$5,500 that we have to pay, we could use for funding other things, but we're going to take care of it and I don't perceive that being a problem.

Commandant continued. We are doing some construction on the Whitehill ramp to rebuild it. We are hoping to have that finished about the middle of October. We also are redoing the Heinz Hall fire alarm. That construction will start within the next ten days or so. Over the next couple of years we are going to be renovating the Malloy and Dack buildings so all of our residents can be in single rooms. Most of our residents are in two-people rooms that have a toilet and a sink two people share and they have to go down the hallway to take a shower. One of the things I've been adamant about since I've

been here is that we have all residents in single rooms. In about four years, all rooms will be single rooms. The construction is going to take about 36 months. We hope to start that early next calendar year. There are some things that the federal government has to approve through that process and we all know what's going on in Washington right now. I'm going to D.C. this weekend and I'll be there Monday to try to figure out some ways to get that handled.

We're going to constantly be doing changes here to the structure. Some of the buildings are old. We are going to be updating them and continuing to work on them. It's Iowa winters, so...concrete changes and so it's a constant process and we're going to constantly be updating them and constantly fixing it cause our residents, the veterans and their spouses here deserve that. Through the transition of the construction, we're going to have to move some residents. We will be moving back into Sheeler and Loftus and back over into Dack and then we're going to do the north tower of Malloy, then the south tower of Malloy, and then Dack. And that's going to take about 12-13 months per each one of those three sections.

November 10 is the Marine Corps birthday. We are going to do a celebration in the Malloy Leisure Resource Center to recognize, so we'll invite all veterans. And we are going to do a celebration here at 10 a.m. There's a group coming in. One of the families of one of our residents is pushing that so we are very excited about that.

Then November 11 is Veterans Day. We will be doing our celebration. Commander is going to be our keynote speaker. Looking forward to hearing what he has to say. We are going to be celebrating Veterans Day on Veterans Day. The ceremony will begin about 10:30 a.m.

Chairperson Jacobus asked with individual rooms, is it more difficult to supervise those residents that require a little more attention? Commandant Worley stated it is. That's a great question. We are struggling and figuring it out. But Shauna and staff work on that every day. What we have out front takes more staff. It's a smaller household. The whole idea is you have more staff and so, the single rooms are going to create, instead of having 56 people in the same geographical area, now we'll have 30 or 28. It's always a challenge so we have to figure out. One thing I didn't mention is in the construction we're also developing couples rooms so couples can stay together. We have about 25 couples that live at the Iowa Veterans Home today and I'm very proud of that. That's a great question. It is a challenge and our staff and our leaders deal with it every day.

A question was asked whether as the different projects get completed, are you going to move the people back as they are done or will you wait until all three of them are done? Commandant Worley answered we are going to be moving them

back as they are done. Once we get the renovation done and those rooms are ready, then we'll move those residents back in.

The Commandant concluded his report.

Iowa Department of
Veterans Affairs
Update:

Executive Director Tymeson reported on the Iowa Veterans Cemetery. In the last two days we have done services for two missing in action: a sailor from WWII and a navigator from Korea. In this case, the family can request a headstone because there are no remains to be interred. They received a headstone and military honors. We are honored to do that for those two families.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is still on track for their monument dedication on Veterans Day. We have a request for a Seabee Monument and we'll cover that in new business.

As of yesterday, we have had 1,305 interments and we have nearly 7,000 applications on file. I continue to travel and talk to groups and hand out applications to get the word out about the Iowa Veterans Cemetery and what a great benefit it is for our veterans.

We requested a federal grant. She received feedback from the National Office that the paperwork looked good and everything was in order. This is the National Cemetery grant for the state cemetery program. They made a couple suggestions that I ask for more niches for the columbarium wall so I just did the paperwork for that. We are hoping to hear sometime in October that the grant has been approved. We are not sure what's going to happen with the federal government and what the process is going to be. It's about a \$1.4 million request to build another set of columbarium walls (they suggested we ask for 1,000 niches, so we did that), to place 400 single grave liners in section 6 (which we have not started to develop section 6 yet), to extend our vehicle storage building so that we can store all of our equipment that is still sitting outside, and then to extend the roof and put doors on. That came to about \$1.4 million.

She started with the Veterans Trust Fund update by reading part of a thank you note from a family who received a grant through the Trust Fund. That family is appreciative. We do hear back from families from time to time. Because of the legislative action that was taken, we do not have a backlog. Any of those grants that still need to be processed are because the work has not been done or we are waiting for something from the veteran or the vendor.

The Honor Guard reimbursement has been reinstated by the Commission. We went ahead and processed all of the past Honor Guard applications. We have sent out the new guidelines saying that program has been opened back up, new application forms and directions. We want to be sure we have funds in the Trust Fund for things like replacing septic systems and all the other emergency things we've used the funds for, then we will honor those Honor Guard reimbursements at the end of the year with the funds that we have left.

There are some new guidelines on the website for the Injured Veteran Grant Program because the definition of seriously injured or very seriously injured was put into law. The rules were updated to show that it must be a combat-related injury and treatment not as a result of record.

The Military Home Ownership program is a \$5,000 grant for those who have deployed since 9/11. \$1.6 million was appropriated for that. That would provide 320 grants. In the first two months we had 80 applications. Veterans are staying in Iowa and buying homes in Iowa. We are still working with the DOT on the veterans' designation on the driver's license. We are hoping to have it all done before Veterans Day so that information and directions can be distributed. The DOT is moving very quickly on this to make it happen. We are getting with the county offices so that we can make it easier for veterans to get their status verified and then they just take that form into the DOT.

Jodi is serving on a state-wide elder abuse task force. Jodi explained it is so easy for organizations to take advantage of veterans and it is difficult to decide who is legitimate. She encouraged everyone to make contact with their local veteran organization if they want to make a donation or need help in any way.

The Legislative Update: Our coalition meeting is set for next week. We have had good responses from the leaders of the veteran organizations to come for that meeting.

Budget Update:

We have finished and closed out FY12. We were able to roll forward into this year \$7,500 that we can spend on technology purchases. We need to replace our document scanning and retrieval system and this will go towards that project.

For FY13, the Legislature increased our Appropriation by about \$26,000, which probably will barely cover our salary increases. I was able to save money this year because I have two temporary employees. We are down two employees so I had two temp hires. They don't receive benefits so that is money that is saved in the budget. We will be fine in FY13 because we still have those two temp hires for a couple of months. We are in the process of putting together and inputting

our FY14 and FY15 budgets. The Department of Public Defense wants to move us to another building, so we need a fire suppression system because of our numerous files of paper discharges. We also need to remodel the restroom and doors to provide handicap access. They will be charging us rent which we are not currently paying.

The Veteran Coalition meeting is next week. There will be county association training. We also will have Veterans Day programs on Veterans Day at the cemetery at 8 a.m. and at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium at 11 a.m.

Wreaths Across America will be the 15th according to that website and the Veterans Cemetery will participate in that and then Veterans Day at the State Capitol is scheduled for January 23.

In response to a question, Chairperson Jacobus explained the process for the applications of the Trust Fund.

Meeting break:

A meeting break was taken at 11:25 a.m.

Old Business:
SPPG:

Chairperson Jacobus explained the next item under Old Business was the adjustment to the agenda and that is the State Public Policy Group. We have been working with the Iowa Veterans Mental Health Task Force where Arlinda McKeen from the State Public Policy Group is representing us at a wide variety of meetings that pertain to veterans. We have asked them to come to our quarterly meetings to give us an update.

Arlinda thanked the Chairperson, the Commission and Director Tymeson.

The focus of the work we are doing is to connect the Commission to veterans mental health. This week one of our staff veterans has an extended family member impacted by mental health issues who is a service member in Afghanistan. So this makes it more important to us, more important in our state and certainly more important to our families that we know. We need to become engaged and involved in anything we can so we can improve veterans services to veterans, service members and their families.

One of our priorities included cleaning up the information received from the previous work we had done.

Access to Recovery is a four-year grant funded by SAMHSA, Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, federal Department of Health & Human Services. It is a grant to provide and facilitate mental health services to people. Arlinda gave an update on their activities.

A part of this new focus on veterans and service members and families was to engage the technical assistance provider at the national level. Several technical assistant sessions, webinars or conference calls were held that focused on three specific learning communities. Arlinda gave a brief description of their activities.

Arlinda talked about legislation that passed last year for mental health services and how SPPG is looking at all aspects of services and delivery to all veterans, including the rural areas. They are also looking at finding other opportunities to wrap the veteran mental health issues with other things, such as the public library connection with the counties.

SPPG spent a good amount of time focusing with the service members, families and veterans, and with the Department of Public Health. The data group had come back with some interesting break downs of data. The University of Iowa and the Veterans Administration are working closely, looking at different ways to look at data. Arlinda gave a summary of other activities that relate to integrating primary health care or behavioral health care in a primary care setting and some of the community health centers linking up with some of the mental health providers to try to do referrals quickly and easily.

Another one of the focuses of SPPG is to do inventory of services and try to make sure that people are aware of them. A survey has been developed that will be given to each county director at their October meeting. A luncheon on the 11th on Transcendental Meditation, or levitation will be held. That is another good resource.

We will be representing the Commission at the 24th Mental Health Conference, which is October 9 and 10 in Ames. SPPG will be included in mental health redesign planning sessions and breakout sessions. There will be a significant focus on veterans service members and their families.

Kevin Gabbert from IDPH called Arlinda to update SPPG on another grant that they have received focusing on substance abuse, not mental health, but they hope to eventually move to mental health.

In response to a question, Arlinda explained they are a small, consulting company and the Commission has retained them to work on behalf of the Commission. They are not a government entity.

Chairperson Jacobus thanked Arlinda for her report.

Iowa Veterans Trust Chairperson Jacobus commented that Jodi covered the update on the Iowa Veterans Trust Fund, but he wants to make sure

- Fund Update: everyone is aware that all of the areas we had suspended are now lifted. We are supporting all of the items that were approved by the Legislature when the whole Trust Fund came into existence. There is no backlog and applications for the Trust Fund have been processed. This includes all \$100 reimbursements. The Commission has already reimbursed veteran service organizations over \$55,000 in \$100 which were delayed due to this category of support being suspended. As of the 31st of October 2012, there is over \$164,000 available to support applications.
- Veterans Legislative Coalition Meeting: Jodi covered the Veterans Coalition Meeting. We want to see all of the Veterans Service Organizations and all the stakeholders within the veteran community represented to have input at that meeting. Jodi put together the last meeting and it was outstanding. It was an outstanding product we can all move forward with so that not every organization is working their own agenda into the legislative community.
- Salute to Veterans Parade Update: Chairperson Jacobus commented that we were very involved in that event. There was a color guard that consisted of a joint color guard of Vietnam Veterans; the Budweiser Clydesdales, the Wells Fargo Stagecoach, and a total of 112 entries participated in the parade and it was outstanding.
- Korean War Veterans 60th Anniversary Commemoration Program Update: Chairperson Jacobus gave an update on the Korean War Veterans 60th Anniversary Commemoration Program that took place on July 14 at the Drake University Knapp Center. There were over 1,950 RSVPs for that event, which is incredible, and each one of these veterans received a certificate. There were 634 present on the day of the program. There were over 3,200 people that actually showed up that afternoon on the 14th of July. It was an awesome program. It was a job very well done.
- Transcendental Meditation Lunch & Learn Update: Chairperson Jacobus announced Jerry Yellen, a U.S. Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, who flew fighter missions over Japan from airfields on Iwo Jima, had attended the last Commission Meeting. He provided an overview of the positive impact that transcendental meditation can have on those suffering from the effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. There will be a summit on Thursday, October 11, 2012, at 12:00 noon, at the Marriott in West Des Moines, where this will be addressed in detail. There will be a free lunch before. It is an overview of how transcendental meditation can be a potential solution to a veteran's challenges with mental health issues, specifically as they pertain to PTSD.
- Chairperson Jacobus explained that he went through this training. There are cases out there where transcendental meditation has had a positive feedback on people who are suffering from PTSD. This is a potential for our veterans to have a solution where there is no medication, where you can solve your challenges using your brain. I think it's an

awesome activity. The first step is learning what it is from professionals who are more knowledgeable how the brain works. He encouraged everyone to communicate this to our community leaders so everybody knows what our resources are.

Commission Expenses and Travel Reimb.: Chairperson Jacobus asked Jodi for a review of how Commission members receive reimbursement for expenses and travel. Jodi explained that Mari can give them the guidelines and help them fill out the travel vouchers.

Jodi requested that if a Commissioner has been invited to an event to represent the Commission, send an e-mail to the other Commission members for informational purposes and to get their feedback on their experiences if they had previously attended that event. Chairperson Jacobus asked for a motion that if there is an event where one of the Commissioners is asked to be present in their role as Commissioner, then they send out an e-mail message to all of us, saying this is the event, this is what the cost estimate is for mileage, lodging and meals (you have to have receipts for any meals), and how attending that event is good for veterans. Send that out to all Commission members far enough ahead that we can all just say yeah, I agree, so that we basically have a process to back up what it is that we're doing. Commissioner McMartin also commented that it helps if someone else is going, they can ride together and/or stay together.

Commissioner McMartin made the motion stated above. Seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Roll call vote was not taken. Approved unanimously.

New Business:
Seabee Monument: Jodi passed out a copy of the Seabee request for approval to donate a monument. On the back is a picture of the monument. It is not the correct size, but that is what it is going to look like. These are the monuments that they are donating to all the national veteran cemeteries. The size is on the application and they changed it from jet black to gray granite. Because of its size, we want to look at putting it in a different spot. The second sheet of paper is a picture of where we want to put it. As you continue down the sidewalk past all the taller monuments, there is an area where we have the "in memory of" headstones. There is a 16 foot area in front of where we would like to center the Seabee monument about 8 feet in front of the front row of headstones. The monument will be 34 inches tall. It is a considerably smaller monument than the other ones. If organizations want to donate a small monument, this gives them something to go by.

Chairperson Jacobus asked if the Seabees were an official association or organization. Jodi commented they are not a congressionally chartered veterans organization. Our guidelines state veterans organizations or military organizations. She thought that they fit within the guidelines of the organization. Seabees are a recognized element of the military.

Chairperson Jacobus asked the veterans committee what their recommendation was. An unidentified person stated that as far as the veterans cemetery committee is concerned, he contacted some people that are former Seabees and there is not a Seabee organization in the State of Iowa. The point Jodi brought up is correct. He has been out to the cemetery to look at where Jodi is recommending that this be placed. It is his conclusion at this point that we should approve this. Again, based on size, based on design, it is very appropriate for this particular location. So I would make a recommendation. Commissioner Bill Wallace made a motion that this be approved. Second by a Dan Gannon. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote was not taken. Approved unanimously.

Fort Des Moines
Museum and
Education Center:

Chairperson Jacobus introduced Lisa Whitmarsh Peterson with the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center.

Lisa thanked the Commission for the invitation to address them today. She passed out some information to go along with her presentation. I am the new educator at the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center as of August. She is a veterans education programs coordinator and will be handling all veteran-related events. She briefed attendees on her background.

The Fort Des Moines Museum is a non-profit museum. It receives grants and funding and admission charges but is not part of the United States government or veterans programming as such. We are a community based organization that is gender equality. We celebrate the fact that there are World War I veterans that were African Americans who came to the Fort and became officers and leaders, not only within the army, but in our community. And then in World War II as the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was formed and later Women's Army Corps, we celebrate all gender and related military service as we would today. Our theme is Honoring our Past and Foraging our Future. I am a part of a five-year outreach program called Reaching the Honorable in Gratitude. The veterans are honorable. We are reaching out with great gratitude. It is now our desire to put forth several initiatives which impact the veteran and business and little communities of Iowa through various programs. Lisa briefly summarized the various programs she is involved with.

Chairperson Jacobus indicated her information was very informative and he appreciated the handout. He will send it out.

Child Support
Calculations—Mike
Capp II:

Chairperson Jacobus introduced Michael Capp. He asked Michael to summarize his situation because it pertains to others who may benefit and maybe someone can try to figure out if there is anything we can do to help.

Michael thanked the Commission for inviting him to come. I really appreciate it and the opportunity to address not only this Commission but anyone who would join forces with myself and others. I'm a service connected disabled veteran. I am a former Marine. This issue resides in Iowa as well as other states in the U.S. and the issue specifically is in our district courts in how they are treating veterans. I was involved with a nasty divorce that began around 2009, with it being finalized in 2010. Due to service connected disabilities, I have lost a previous job. Then spent approximately 16 months to try and find gainful employment, but was not able to do so. Came across the determination I've got to go back to school. So I went back to the VA and the VA said I have a serious employment handicap, 60% disabled. They sent him back to Chapter 31 of VA Voc Rehab, which I've done and have been a full-time student and working part time. I'm a hard worker. I try to hide my disabilities because of employment issues. I went back to work full time. The issue that I had was I could not afford appropriate counsel in court, so that was very, very difficult and detrimental to myself, my family, my kids, my extended family. There are many, many other cases that are just as diverse as my case in Iowa and throughout the U.S. My case has been ongoing for the past three and one-half years and it's likely to continue for another seven with no end in sight.

One of the biggest issues that is hanging over my head at this point is the child support. And right now what I'm supposed to be currently paying as court ordered, is approximately \$1,600 a month. Originally about three years ago, that was \$1,907.60 per month I was supposed to pay, court ordered. Now of that, about \$200 of that is equalization. I ended up with a car that was not paid for, a cat and the majority of my clothes. I did not, and still to this day, do not have my tools or equipment that I used to use for my livelihood. I have been trying through the court system to deal with this to try and somehow support myself, my kids, etc. With that said, I am liable for 100% federal monies that my former spouse received for the children and I'm also responsible for 100% of the travel expenses, for the visitations of my kids. So it's a very one-sided case and it's primarily, I feel, because I did not have appropriate legal counsel. I started actually tracking this issue in 2011. In 2011, I paid \$19,053 and some change for court-ordered support. That was 79.37% of my total deposits. And as of this year, I paid so far \$16,365 that totaled 83.3% so far of my total deposits this year. No one can survive on that amount of income. I've been blessed in the fact that my parents have taken me in. They are providing a roof over my head, they are providing the majority of my food, so I'm having to come up with fuel and a couple of bills for my school and the VA is actually helping me get through school so I can find some gainful employment. I am a member of Iowa Fathers because I searched for any kind of legal help I could get. Iowa Fathers was the only one I could find in Iowa that would give me any kind of help. It's just people through a proceeding pro se in trying to figure out their cases, etc. The VA does not have to my knowledge any assistance for any veterans who are going through this who are homeless or not, but cannot afford legal counsel. I did go to Iowa Legal Aide, and was not allowed to be represented by them. One of the factors is my former spouse knows the system very well and had used them for one case, so then that

presents a conflict of interest. So I exhausted all avenues that I can think of for legal resources. But what the court has done in this state, and in some other states, is they will take a veteran and although the federal code under Title 48, Subsection 5301, specifies that you cannot take service connected veterans disability compensation and figure it towards child support, the district court is thumbing their nose at the federal code and in my case, they tried to apportion it, which they could not do because the VA won't allow that. But they tried to apportion that same as the Guardsmen, for the civilian sector, but even though they can't apportion it, they still calculate it into your income and the issue with this is not only do they calculate it in, but they calculate it in as a much higher rate because it's non-taxed. There's the first big red flag you can't use this. So what does that do to the veteran? The veteran already has that primary issue that they can't find employment because of their disabilities. They're getting this service-connected disability from the taxpayers to compensate for this issue. And now the state is taking this at a much higher rate, more so than an able-bodied person. Now that the issue with a couple of veterans, myself being one, is that, what are we going to do with this veteran. He can't pay his child support. We're going to make him do it so we're going to imprison him. Now I've been put in jail for ten days. They suspended 110 days provided I pay additional money. Where's this coming from? There are veterans who have in essence been put in debtors' prison at taxpayers' expense, to get taxpayer money from them to pay for child support. I tried to take my case back to court this past year and the judge said you don't really have a significant change of income. My income was originally based on one paycheck stub for 62 hours for one week and that was figured in addition to my veteran service-connected disability. That's how my child support was initially based. So initially, her attorney came up with the fact that well, you make \$36,000. I actually have tax forms that say I made \$11,000 that year, three times of what I was actually making. I went back again and tried to get a modification for support. They said well, you're going to school, you're getting a stipend from the VA. You're getting scholarships, federal and state PELL grants, so that's all income, we're going to take that, and still continue your child support. So these are issues that are affecting veterans here in Iowa and throughout the states. I'm also a member of OFFE, which stands for Operation Firing For Effect, and there's approximately 180 members in OFFE and the majority of us have been in prison for this specific issue.

A person who was working even full time at that point, who can no longer support themselves, you totally strip them of all hope. That really affects a person mentally as far as holding a full-time job, being a full-time student, trying to do another full-time job of representing themselves in court and then working part-time on top of it. It's a little bit much. And that's just my case. There are other guys too and I know of a third case. I haven't specifically spoken directly with the family, but this veteran took his life, and I believe it was due to this specific issue. I can say from personal experience, this last November, I was there. The bells and whistles and flags were going off and I said I have to go find somebody to talk to because my back's against the wall. I don't know what to do. I am expecting at some point in time that she will try and take me back to court and say you're not paying full amount of child support and the judge will put me back in jail. I am

not an attorney so immediately when I walk into that court room, I'm at a disadvantage. We need to make parenting in Iowa, for veterans and non-veterans, equal among the parties. The district court in Iowa needs to adhere to the federal court. Veteran, non-veteran, it doesn't make a difference, but the veterans do need to have some type of assistance and ability to find some type of legal counsel. A lot of times the veterans have issue finding employment. That is my issue that I'm coming before you today. I'm asking anybody and everybody to help me, whether it be try and get legislation passed that will specifically state that they must adhere to this code, whether it's judicial side or to help other veterans or homeless veterans or veterans who are going through these types of legal issues because I know there are a lot of folks out there that this affects and their families and nobody has really tracked it.

Chairperson Jacobus commented no one is saying he should not pay child support. His concern is the rate that he is being charged is unfair and it recently got to that amount because he wasn't able to have representation.

Commissioner McMartin stated one of our county service officers had the same issue with the federal government. The 60% compensation for dependents, but it is really not the child's money, it is your money for having dependents. They should not have used those funds to base your child support on. His contention was that the compensation should not be used to base child support payments and they should adhere to federal regulations. That's what the Association supported.

Michael clarified that everyone that I'm speaking on behalf of today is doing their best in supporting their children to their best ability. It's not a fact of I shouldn't pay child support. It's the fact of yes, I should pay child support and this is what it should be and this is how it should be calculated. It should be calculated lawfully within federal and state code. And the issue is that Iowa right now is not following the federal code.

Jodi stated she has talked to Mike and a couple of other veterans in similar situations. She has been to the court administrator for the Iowa Courts and asked them to look at how they are determining child support in Iowa. There's a lot of case law out there that says the VA handler intended disability compensation strictly for the veteran. They intended it for the veteran and support of the veterans' family. I'm not a lawyer so I don't want to get into case law but the court administrator did call me back. They are in the process of reviewing how they calculate child support. My guess is that they are doing it differently in different parts of the state. It depends on the judge that you get on how the child support is calculated. So I asked him to review the process that they are using in determining child support and told him the issue as far as disability compensation and should it or should it not be used for child support or the calculation of child support and he promised to get back to me once he did some research. He said he would have to do some research but quite frankly, he couldn't answer the question. He knows we need a concrete answer back.

Michael thanked the Commission for their time.

Public Comment: Chairperson Jacobus thanked the two department commanders from The American Legion for coming. He also thanked the DAV, Iowa Veterans Council, AMVETS, etc. Thank you very much for being here. We really appreciate that.

Chairperson Jacobus announced the next Commission meeting is the January 9, 2013. If you want to have an agenda item, please let him know so it can be added to the agenda. We want to have all the information on the agenda that Mari publishes because we have to have it published a week before.

Announcements: Chairperson Jacobus announced that on Wednesday, October 3, 2012, there will be a dedication ceremony for a flag that's going to go to Hoover High School Learning Resource Center in Des Moines, Iowa. It's going to be in memory and honor of a U.S. army soldier who died in 1985 while serving with the 101st, along with 227 other soldiers who were enroute back to the U.S. when their airplane crashed in Canada. We are working with the family to dedicate a flag. It was flown by Congressman Boswell over the U.S. capitol and will be placed in the school library on his 48th birthday. We are asking the veterans' community to attend.

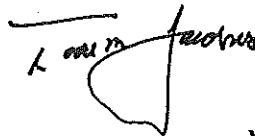
Commissioner McMartin announced she attended the Clay County Fair in Spencer, Iowa, in September. There were 51 entries. It was a wonderful parade. Every veteran that participated or came that day got in for free and there were activities and programs going on throughout the day. If they can do it there, we need to do it in Des Moines where every veteran gets in for free. They had 60,000 people show up that week, on Saturday and Sunday. It is very well received.

It was announced that Friday is the POW/MIA Recognition Day and the Des Moines hospital is sponsoring a lunch at 11:30 for Ex-POWs at 11:30. We only had 26 that signed up so if you know anybody else, we've got food for 77. We'll have cake afterwards and at 1:00 will be the program. It is at the Gold Star Museum.

Chairperson Jacobus announced if anybody is aware of any events that pertain to veterans, send him details so he can get them in our listing and it is posted to the Department website and sent throughout the state. We want veterans to be aware of all these awesome events that are going on. Please send him the details to make that happen.

Next Meeting: The next Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs meeting will be held Wednesday, January 9, 2013, 10:00 a.m., Camp Dodge, Johnston, Iowa.

Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs
Wednesday, September 19, 2012 - 10:00 a.m.
Malloy Leisure Resource Center

 Todd Jacobus, Chairperson
Mike Hines, Admin. Assist.
Meeting Secretary

ADJOURNMENT: With no other business to come before the group, the meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

nlm
comm mtg 91912